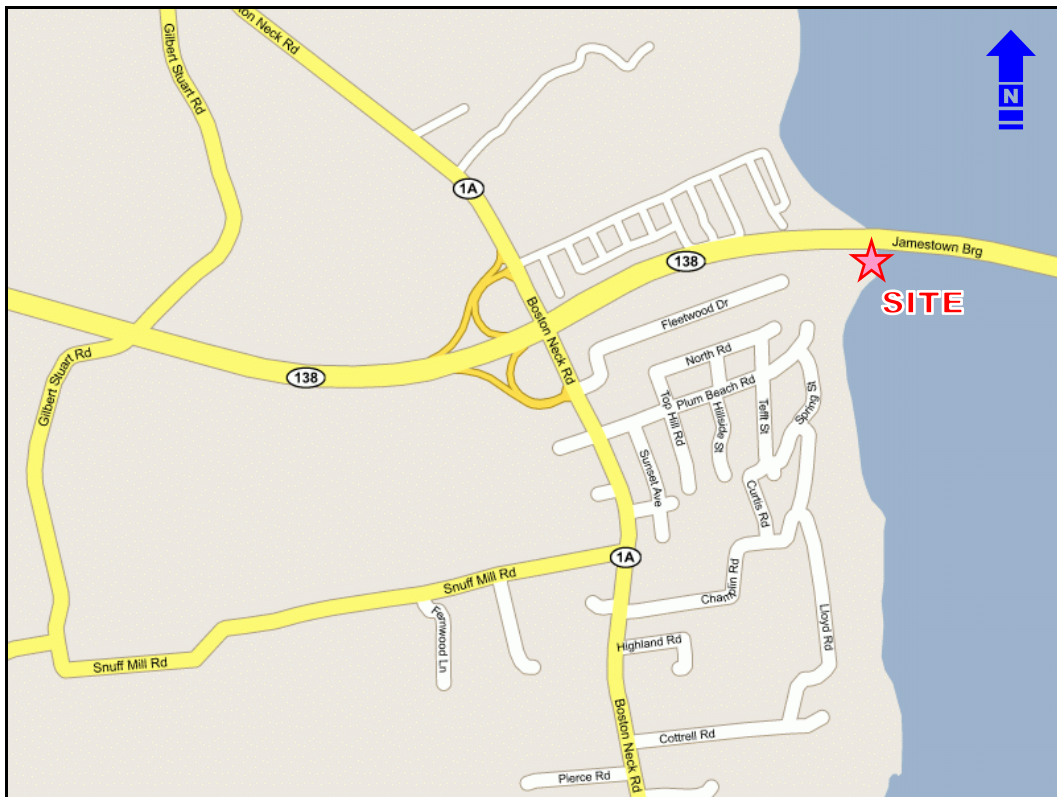


# OLD JAMESTOWN BRIDGE SITE

North Kingstown  
State Route 138



## OLD JAMESTOWN BRIDGE SITE

*This evaluation presents summary information for the Old Jamestown Bridge Site in the format of the alternative access site evaluations contained herein. For a comprehensive assessment of the Old Jamestown Bridge Site, please see Volume I: Evaluation of the Old Jamestown Bridge Site.*

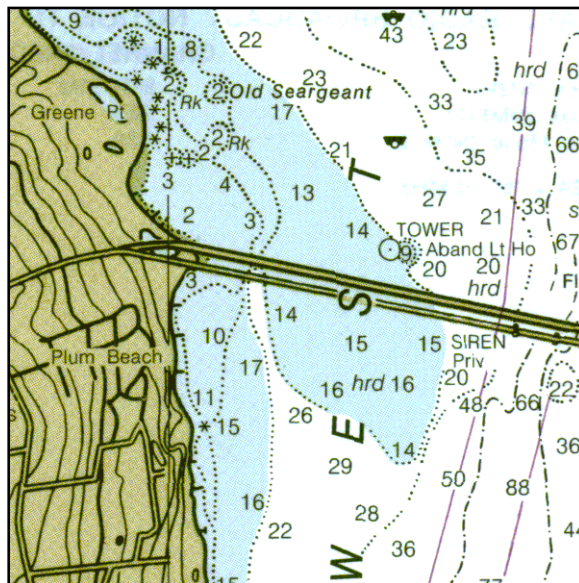
### Site Description

The Old Jamestown Bridge Site is located in North Kingstown at the west abutment of the Old Jamestown Bridge, which has been closed to traffic since the opening of the Jamestown-Verrazano Bridge in 1992. Accessed directly from State Route 138, the state-owned parcel is currently being utilized as a landside work area (field offices, equipment, storage) in the R.I. Department of Transportation (RIDOT) contract to remove the easterly three-fourths of the Old Jamestown Bridge (Contract No. 2005-CB-035). While once accessible for a period following its closure, fishing from old bridge has been prohibited since the mid-1990s.

In the design of the replacement structure, it was originally envisioned that a portion of westerly trestle spans of the old bridge could be retained and redeveloped for use as a recreational fishing pier. Passed in 1987, Rhode Island General Law § 24-12-51.1 directs (a) the RIDOT to retain a portion of the North Kingstown side of the Old Jamestown Bridge for use as a public fishing pier and (b) the RIDEM to develop and maintain a park on State-owned land adjacent to the bridge in North Kingstown. In the interim that followed, this portion of the old bridge has deteriorated to the point where it is no longer structurally feasible to rehabilitate it for fishing pier use. While the remaining trestle spans will be removed under a separate future contract, a new fishing pier could conceivably be constructed along the footprint of the old bridge.

### Location Assessment

*Bay Location.* (also see Section 2 of *Volume I: Evaluation of the Old Jamestown Bridge Site*) The Old Jamestown Bridge Site is located along the North Kingstown shoreline in the mid/upper West Passage of Narragansett Bay. The dominant physical features within these waters are the Jamestown Bridges (the Old Jamestown Bridge and Jamestown-Verrazano Bridge) which span the passage between North Kingstown and Jamestown (see aerial photo, Photo 1). The main navigation channel for both structures is well removed from the North Kingstown shoreline (approximately 4,500 feet). Near-shore water uses in the vicinity of the site are primarily recreational: both the Plum Point Shores club (to the north) and the Plum Beach Club (to the south) support low-intensity beach and swimming uses, as well as small-craft boating and sailing.



The West Passage has historically offered high quality recreational fishing and exhibits excellent species richness (see Appendix C). As reported in the Online Recreational Fishing Survey,

Striped Bass, Bluefish, Summer Flounder, and Scup are all well represented spring through fall, with Tautog, Black Sea Bass, Weakfish, and Winter Flounder also reported in this region of the Bay. Waters in the vicinity of this site were assessed as fully meeting aquatic life support criteria and are also open to shellfishing year-round. These waters have been designated a water quality goal of SA (high quality) by the RIDEM (see Appendix B).

*Land Location.* (also see Section 2 of *Volume I: Evaluation of the Old Jamestown Bridge Site*) Located along the corridor of State Route 138 in North Kingstown, the Old Jamestown Bridge Site consists of the state-owned parcel at the North Kingstown landing of the Old Jamestown Bridge, as well as two partially constructed ramps which provide access to the site (via Route 138 Eastbound) and egress from the site (via Route 138 Westbound). The parcel is currently being utilized as a landside work area (field offices, equipment, storage) in the contract to remove the easterly three-fourths of the Old Jamestown Bridge (see Photos 4, 5).

Route 138 is a 4-lane, limited access freeway which serves as an arterial link (via the Jamestown-Verrazano Bridge) between mainland Rhode Island and the island communities of Jamestown and Newport / Aquidneck Island. Given its location along this freeway, the site is readily accessible through the regional highway infrastructure, both from the mainland (via State Route 4, U.S. Routes 1, 1A) and the aforementioned island communities (via the Jamestown-Verrazano and Pell/Newport Bridges). The Route 138 / 1A interchange is approximately ½ mile west of the site, at which a “park and ride” lot is serviced by multiple RIPTA bus routes.

Land use surrounding the site is primarily residential, as the Route 138 corridor through this section of North Kingstown is flanked by moderate-density residential neighborhoods to its north and south. Low-intensity recreational uses are also supported by the two private beach clubs along this stretch of shoreline (Plum Point Shores to the north and Plum Beach Club to the south).

*Environmental Constraints and Permitting.* The West Passage waters in the vicinity of the Old Jamestown Bridge Site are designated as Type 2 (Low-Intensity Use) by the CRMC. Consisting of a sandy beach with accumulated shells, the coastal feature along this shoreline also includes a brackish tidal inlet located between the abutments of the Jamestown-Verrazano and Old Jamestown Bridges (see Photo 7). This inlet receives discharges from freshwater wetlands directly south/southwest of the landside parcel and immediately north of Route 138 (see *Volume I: Evaluation of the Old Jamestown Bridge Site*, Figures 10 and 11). No eelgrass is documented in the vicinity of the site.

### Facilities Assessment

This Old Jamestown Bridge Site differs largely from other alternative access sites in that fishing is currently prohibited from the primary shoreline feature. For a period following the opening of the Jamestown-Verrazano Bridge, the old bridge remained accessible (but unsanctioned) for recreational fishing. During this time the site was neither maintained nor monitored, and its use was marred by littering, vandalism, and concerns over safety. These issues ultimately led to the bridge being gated-off and permanently closed to public access in the mid-1990s (see Photo 2).

As previously noted, the concept of a recreational fishing facility at the Old Jamestown Bridge Site can be traced back to the design of the Jamestown-Verrazano Bridge and the passing of Rhode Island General Law § 24-12-51.1 in 1987. Through the construction of the Jamestown-Verrazano Bridge and upgrading of Route 138 in North Kingstown, access infrastructure for the site was partially constructed in anticipation of future fishing pier development. These facilities

consist of (a) an access ramp to the site from Route 138 Eastbound and (b) an egress ramp which underpasses the freeway to Route 138 Westbound. Both of these ramps are currently used for construction access in the RIDOT project to remove the Old Jamestown Bridge (see Photos 5, 6).

Past use of the Old Jamestown Bridge for fishing was also hindered by a lack of viable access and parking. Visitors would often park along the local streets which flank Route 138, creating an undesirable condition in these residential neighborhoods (roads have since been posted as "no parking"). The RIDOT preliminary design concept for development of the Old Jamestown Bridge Site called for a small parking lot within the site as well as a pedestrian / bicycle path connecting the site to the Route 1A park and ride lot. Given that the only other viable means of public access to the site would be by automobile (via the Route 138 access/egress ramps), the provision of a shared use path within the Route 138 right-of-way would offer equitable access to the site for pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons using public transportation. Such a path would also allow for overflow parking in the park and ride lot should the site lot reach capacity. See Section 4.3 of *Volume 1: Evaluation of the Old Jamestown Bridge Site* for a more detailed analysis of parking and access considerations.

The easterly three-fourths of the Old Jamestown Bridge is being removed under the ongoing demolition project, which is anticipated to be complete by 2007. As it is no longer feasible to rehabilitate the remaining trestle spans for use as a fishing pier, this portion of the structure will be removed under a separate future contract shortly thereafter. Consequently, any future development of a recreational fishing facility at the site would involve the construction of a new pier structure. Considerations relative to the potential construction of a new pier structure are addressed in detail in Section 4 of *Volume 1: Evaluation of the Old Jamestown Bridge Site*.

#### Existing Site Conditions

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<i>Existing Fishing Facilities</i>	Not Applicable			
<i>Parking</i>	Not Applicable			
<i>Compatibility with Surrounding Land / Water Uses</i>		X		
<i>Statewide Transportation Accessibility / Public Transit</i>				X
<i>Site Aesthetics</i>			X	
	Low		Medium	High
<i>Water Quality (see Appendix B)</i>				X

#### Priority for Capital Improvements: High

Upon subsequent investigation of alternative access sites under the second phase of this study, the Old Jamestown Bridge Site remains one of the most viable locations along Narragansett Bay for a moderate-scale public fishing pier facility. Examined in detail through the first phase of this study (see *Volume 1: Evaluation of the Old Jamestown Bridge Site*), the location of this

site offers excellent access to the quality fishing in the waters of the West Passage, is centrally located within the Lower Bay, and is readily accessible to the State's population via Route 138. Though the scale of development would be limited to an extent due to the landside parcel size (limiting the extent to which parking and other facilities can be provided on-site) and the residential uses which flank the shoreline site (limiting pedestrian accessibility), it appears that these limitations could be overcome through proper design and management (including a path connection to the park and ride lot at Route 1A, landscaping, etc.). As the Old Jamestown Bridge currently occupies this location in the West Passage, development of a new pier structure on this footprint would not impact existing water uses in the vicinity.

It is also important to consider that there remains a strong negative perception among the residents of surrounding neighborhoods with regard to recreational fishing at the Old Jamestown Bridge. This sentiment is rooted the years immediately following the opening of the Jamestown-Verrazano Bridge, during which unsanctioned use of the bridge adversely impacted the character of the surrounding area. For the development of public fishing pier and park to be viable at the Old Jamestown Bridge Site, the State must commit to (a) the long-term maintenance and management of the both landside and pier facilities, and (b) ensuring that adverse impacts to surrounding uses are effectively mitigated in the design and operation of the facility.

From a broad perspective, development of a recreational fishing pier at the Old Jamestown Bridge Site also appears to have strong support from the recreational fishing public. When asked for locations within the study area they believe would be ideal for the development of a public recreational fishing pier, approximately 40% of respondents to the *2005 Online Recreational Fishing Survey* suggested the Old Jamestown Bridge Site. The next most often suggested location (Rocky Point, Warwick) was provided by approximately 8% of respondents.





**Photo 1.** Old Jamestown Bridge trestle looking east from the North Kingstown shoreline.



**Photo 2.** "No Trespassing" sign at the west abutment of the Old Jamestown Bridge (photo taken prior to demolition contract).



**Photo 3.** Old Jamestown Bridge Site looking west from the Jamestown-Verrazano Bridge.



**Photo 4.** Demolition project field offices and work area at the Old Jamestown Bridge Site.





**Photo 5.** Construction access (left) and egress (right) ramps for the demolition contract.



**Photo 6.** Looking east to the Old Jamestown Bridge Site from the access ramp (clearing for demolition project).





**Photo 7.** Brackish tidal inlet located between the Jamestown-Verrazano and Old Jamestown Bridges.



**Photo 8.** Looking south along the North Kingstown shoreline from the west abutment of the Old Jamestown Bridge.